UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

Thursday, September 4, 2025

Straws in the Wind - Part 91

From the Daily Princetonian: *Food trucks, trips to New York City, and rock-stacking activities during winter break will be no more. Following the spring semester's funding cuts, hiring freeze, and scrutiny from the federal government, the University will discontinue the Office of Campus Engagement (OCE) and its flagship program, Wintersession, effective Sept. 2, citing "challenging budgetary circumstances," according to an email sent to Campus Life staff...*

Wintersession will be shut down after six years... The office's closure is one of the first significant cuts announced by the University, which asked most departments and units in May to prepare plans for 5–10 percent budget reductions. "This change and other cost-reduction efforts reflect financial challenges spurred by the federal government's reassessment of its relationship with American higher education, as well as broader economic uncertainty," the University said in a press release.

Launched in 2021, Wintersession was a free, two-week series of events open to all members of the Princeton community. Anyone could lead a session, which ranged from skill-based workshops to keynote events...

Full story at https://www.dailyprincetonian.com/article/2025/08/princeton-news-adpol-university-discontinues-wintersession-in-wake-of-recent-budget-cuts.

From the Middlebury Campus: [Middlebury] *The college will end all residential graduate programs and certain online degrees at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS) by June 2027. In a community-wide email and video announcement, college President Ian Baucom said that the Board of Trustees decided on Wednesday, August 27 to approve his recommendation that Middlebury phase its Monterey-based programs out within the next two years, citing severe under enrollment and financial deficits. This decision follows the college's announcement of its $14.1 million dollar deficit in April, $8.7 million of which is accounted for by the struggling Institute. The series of cost-saving measures listed in that budget update, which included reductions to the retirement benefits of faculty and staff and increases in enrollment, sparked several forms of protest and calls to dissolve MIIS from Vermont faculty, staff and students. In May, faculty voted in overwhelming favor of a motion demanding the closure of MIIS within three years...*

Full story at https://www.middleburycampus.com/article/2025/08/middlebury-to-close-miis-by-june-2027.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: Middlebury, politics, Princeton U

Wednesday, September 3, 2025

Circle Sept. 18 on your calendar

From the Bruin: *A district court judge said... she will hear arguments over whether UCLA's suspended National Institutes of Health grants should be restored. The federal government suspended around 800 grants from the NIH, National Science Foundation and U.S. Department of Energy to UCLA in late July. The federal government alleged in letters announcing the suspensions that the university enabled antisemitism in its research environments, illegally used affirmative action and has policies "allowing men to participate in women's sports."*

Rita F. Lin, a California federal district court judge, will hear arguments from attorneys representing the federal government and UC researchers Sept. 18 to decide if she should grant a preliminary injunction, an action that preserves the status quo until a court can decide on the merits of the case...

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

- Faculty are fighting back
- Faculty Lawsuit Demands Public Access to Trump Administration's Settlement Demands on University of California
- Coalition of UC unions condemns Trump's attacks on the UC and the California economy
- Stand up for values in the face of Trump's $300 million cut to UCLA scholars
- Faculty leaders comment on UCB Chancellor Lyon's appearance before House Committee on Education and the Workforce

Remaking the University

- Liner Note 39. Attack Theory for Education - 9/28/2025
- Liner Note 38. The University of California's Charlie Kirk Tribute Act - 9/16/2025
- Why Should We "Stand Up for the UC?" (Guest Post) - 9/1/2025

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- California Faculty Association (NEA)
- UC-AFT

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Full story at https://dailybruin.com/2025/08/27/district-court-judge-to-hear-arguments-on-restoring-suspended-nih-grants-to-ucla.

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Note: You will be happy or unhappy to know - depending on your viewpoint - that none of the AI programs yours truly tried could correctly draw a Sept. 2025 calendar with Sept. 18 circled. They all drew calendars with Sept. 1 starting on days other than Monday, even when told Sept. 1 should be a Monday.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: health care, politics, UCLA

Straws in the Wind - Part 90

From Inside Higher Ed: *Florida State College at Jacksonville has signed an agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to allow its campus police department to enforce immigration laws... FSCJ joins more than a dozen other public institutions in Florida that struck similar agreements with ICE earlier this year, part of the state's crackdown on immigration under Republican governor Ron DeSantis. While police agencies in a number of other states have signed on to participate in the federal government's immigration enforcement actions, the only campus police forces to join the effort are located in Florida, according to an ICE database that lists partners that have finalized agreements with the federal agency.*

College officials previously told the local news outlet Jax Today that they were under the impression that FSCJ's police department was too small to be considered for an agreement with ICE. However, spokesperson Jill Johnson told Inside Higher Ed by email that is not the case. "Initially we thought that our police department was not large enough," Johnson wrote. "This changed last week when we were notified that our officers were in fact eligible to go through the federal training necessary to be able to work with ICE officials, should the need arise."

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2025/08/19/another-florida-college-signs-agreement-ice.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: diversity, Florida State, Florida State University, politics

A Defensive Fund?

From the Daily Bruin: *UC faculty are proposing the creation of a multi-billion-dollar fund to support UC researchers in the wake of the federal funding suspension to UCLA. The proposal, known as the California Futures Fund, envisions a state-level, pooled fund designed to support UC research, teaching and community service, according to a press release from the Save Our Science Initiative. The fund, which UC faculty rallied in support of at the California State Capitol on Aug. 18, would ensure the safety of the UC from "federal attacks" and promote long-term stability, representatives from the initiative added in the press release.*

Advocates of the CFF suggest that in the short term, funding for the CFF could come from the UC by leveraging its endowment, as well as the UC Blue and Gold fund, said Anna Markowitz, the president of the UCLA Faculty Association, in a written statement. She added that a new source of funding would likely be needed in the long term...

Full story at https://dailybruin.com/2025/08/30/uc-faculty-propose-multi-billion-dollar-fund-in-response-to-federal-funding-freeze.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:15 AM No comments:

Labels: Faculty Association at UCLA, legislature, politics, UC, UCLA

Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 54

From The Atlantic: *During their final meeting of the spring 2024 semester..., the then-dean of Harvard College, Rakesh Khurana, had been providing updates on the graduating class. When he got to GPA, Khurana couldn't help but chuckle at how ludicrously high it was: about 3.8 on average. The rest of the room soon joined in, according to a professor present at the meeting.*

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Contributors

- California Policy Issues
- Toby Higbie
- UCLA Faculty Association

They were cracking up not simply because grades had gotten so high but because they knew just how little students were doing to earn them.

Last year, the university set out to study the state of academics at Harvard. The Classroom Social Compact Committee released its report in January. Students' grades are up, but they're doing less academic work. They skip class at a rate that surprises even the most hardened professors. Many care more about extracurriculars than coursework. "A majority of students and faculty we heard from agree that Harvard College students do not prioritize their academic experience," the committee wrote...

The road to grade-inflation hell was paved with good intentions. As more students applied to Harvard and earning a spot became ever harder, the university ended up filling its classes with students who had only ever gotten perfect grades. These overachievers arrived on campus with even more anxiety than past generations about keeping up their GPA. Students sobbing at office hours, begging their professor to bump a rare B+ to an A–, became a not-uncommon occurrence.

At the same time, professors were coming under more pressure to tend to their students' emotional well-being, Amanda Claybaugh, Harvard's dean of undergraduate education, told me. They received near-constant reminders that Harvard was admitting more students with disabilities, who'd matriculated from under-resourced schools, or who had mental-health issues. Instructors took the message as an exhortation to lower expectations and raise grades. Resisting the trend was hard. ***Few professors want to be known as harsh graders, with the accompanying poor evaluations and low course enrollments****...*

If Harvard is to succeed [in dealing with grade inflation]..., it will be because the political environment has given its initiative an extra level of urgency. The Trump administration's assault on elite institutions generally and Harvard in particular has put the university's public standing at stake. Claybaugh believes that the best way to help Harvard is to acknowledge its flaws and try to fix them. Bringing rigor back to the academic mission seems a natural place to start. "We should be making sure that we are living up to our mission to restore our legitimacy in people's eyes," she told me. "I don't want people all across America thinking, It's a place of ideas I find somehow troubling or offensive, and also, no one goes to class."

Full story at https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2025/08/harvard-college-grade-inflation/684021/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: admissions, Harvard

Nothing Happened Yesterday

We noted yesterday that September 2nd was supposed to be the deadline for UC to "negotiate" with the US Dept. of Justice (DOJ). The question was whether the discussions and contacts UC has had with UC would be seen as "negotiations."

But as of close of business in DC yesterday, there was no notice about UC on the DOJ website:

https://www.justice.gov/news

So that either means that DOJ views whatever is going on as negotiations or that DOJ is slow to react.

We will continue to monitor.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:05 AM No comments:

Labels: politics, UC

Tuesday, September 2, 2025

Generally Helpful Numbers

Table 1
Agree/Disagree: The University of California System "produces important research that benefits communities in California"

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Total statewide	**45**	**26**	**8**	**5**	**11**
Party registration					
Democrat	59	19	5	2	11
Republican	23	35	15	12	11
No Party Preference/other	42	28	8	4	11
Race/ethnicity					
White	49	23	8	5	11
Latino	39	29	8	6	12
Black/African American	53	22	8	2	9
Asian American/Pacific Isle	43	30	10	5	8
Education					
High school graduate or less	33	29	10	7	15
Some college/trade school	40	29	10	6	10
College graduate	52	24	7	4	9
Post graduate education	58	17	6	4	12

From the UC-Berkeley IGS Poll. Respondents with no opinion omitted.

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Source and methodological note at https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2zc0n1n3.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: politics, UC

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